

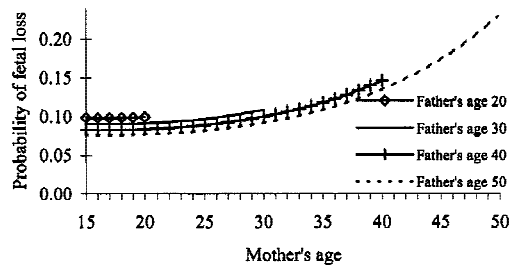
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The effects of famine, maternal age, and paternal age on fetal loss in rural Bangladesh. DB NEILL, DJ HOLMAN, University of Washington, Seattle, WA 98195.

The effect of famine on fetal loss has been well documented for a number of populations. In this paper we examine the effect of famine on fetal loss in rural Bangladesh, which experienced a severe famine during 1973 and 1974 following the 1971 war for independence. Using data from the Internal Centre for Diarrhoeal Disease Research, Bangladesh, the effect of famine on fetal loss is examined considering both maternal age (MA) and paternal age (PA). Observations include records of 65,590 pregnancies from 254,471 individuals followed from 1974 to 1982.

Logistic regression was used to model the effects of MA, PA, and birth year on the probability of fetal loss. As expected, risk of fetal loss increased with MA. An unexpected but consistent finding was that the probability of fetal loss decreased with increasing PA (see figure). The probability of fetal loss declined from 1974 to 1976, but then increased through 1982.

These results support previous studies indicating an increase in fetal loss with MA, but are inconsistent with previous research indicating an increase in fetal loss with PA. Given the marginal health conditions in rural Bangladesh during the study period, the decline in fetal



loss with PA may reflect the effects of better nutritional status for the wives of older males.

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